



March 30, 2023

House Committee on Economic Development and Small Business

**RE:** Support for HB 2023

Dear Committee Member:

I am pleased to submit comments in support of HB 2023.

Greater Portland Inc. (GPI) is the only regional public-private partnership dedicated to creating and expanding jobs and driving tangible regional prosperity. The organization is supported by public-sector partners, private investors and philanthropic groups throughout the region. GPI's service area includes Clark County and Skamania County in Washington, and Multnomah County, Washington County, Clackamas County, Columbia County and Yamhill County in Oregon. Our mission is to attract, grow, and retain traded-sector businesses for all skill levels, and market Greater Portland's competitiveness in coordination with public partners.

It has been our experience that youth sports bring communities together and is commonly embraced by companies looking to grow and relocate to the counties we support. We are of the belief that hosting signature events can provide a much-needed economic boost to host communities. Not only do these events bring visitors to Oregon and its local communities, but they also reinforce the fact that Oregon is a premier destination for athletic and recreational opportunities. HB 2023 will assist Oregon's communities in hosting such events that our youth will have more direct, less expensive access to these activities.

Through the collaboration between the Oregon Travel Commission and Sport Oregon, we believe that funds will be wisely invested in support of a variety of opportunities across Oregon. The manner in which the program will be created will ensure direct local government engagement and will allow the fund to support numerous opportunities throughout the biennium.

As our state and region continues to emerge from a stressful economic period we support any effort that encourages economic activity.

The HB 2023 The Youth Sports Grant Program will offer an opportunity to use the strength and power of youth sports to support hospitality and tourism. Of perhaps greater importance, investing in youth sports will do more for making stronger local communities.

We urge you to support HB 2023.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Monique Claiborne".

Monique Claiborne, President & CEO Greater Portland Inc.